



Town of Warren, Rhode Island

Minutes of the Economic Development Board

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on April 18, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at Warren Town Hall. The presiding officer was Karen Dionne. Board members present were Sara Volino, Tyler Dixon, Kathleen Tucciarone, Ben Terry, Keith Phillis and Jessica Pflaumer. Mark Lombardi and Walter Conklin were absent. Davison Bolster was present at the meeting as a guest. Town Councilor Steven Thompson was in attendance. Keri Cronin from Discover Warren was also in attendance.

1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 21, 2016

The minutes from the regular meeting held on March 21, 2016 were reviewed by the board via email. A motion was made by Mr. Phillis to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by Mr. Terry, and all members were in favor.

2. Discussion of plan for wayfinding signage

Mr. Bolster discussed the background history of various plans to improve both parking signage and wayfinding signage within the Warren village business district. He said that past design plans for wayfinding signage were still relevant today. In the past, the EDB partial funding for wayfinding and municipal parking signage; however, more funding would be needed to complete the project. He discussed a plan to have the majority, if not all, of the commercial and municipal parking lots linked with common signage to alleviate any real or perceived parking limitations in the village business district. In exchange for use of the parking spaces, the town would provide maintenance to the commercial lots. The proposed plan would allow three hours limits on parking spaces for use by visitors to any Warren business, restaurant, or municipal service.

Mr. Bolster also discussed his past design for a color-coded wayfinding signage system that would historic, natural, and municipal sites in the vicinity. The board agreed that a wayfinding signage plan needs to be considered in the future.

Mr. Bolster also commented that he felt that the EDB should consider the vacancies on Main Street a priority concern. Mr. Phillis said that the zoning ordinance survey is the first step in obtaining aggregate data that will assist the town planner in obtaining grants, which is an important piece in the economic development of the town.

Mr. Bolster left the meeting at this time (7:10 PM).

3. Review of zoning ordinance survey

The board continued to discuss the progress of the zoning ordinance survey. The committee handout out copies of the survey and the Warren Open for Business Resolution for the board to review. Ms. Cronin asked if help was needed from the community to assist in completing the survey. Mr. Phillis said that the four committee members—Mr. Phillis, Ms. Plaumer, Mr. Dixon, and Ms. Tucciarone—would be the survey takers because they will be the most familiar with the survey questions. When the survey is complete, the data from the survey will be make available to Discover Warren and other interested groups. Ms. Tucciarone said that the results of the survey will have good secondary effects for the town as a whole. Ms. Dionne questioned if the survey would include general observations about a property such as signage. In response, the committee said the survey will primarily focus on the survey checklist because the goal of the survey is to compile data that can be used in a spreadsheet. Mr. Thompson stated that the survey results will be incredibly useful for revisions to the zoning code and the comprehensive plan that pertain to economic development.

Ms. Pflaumer asked if anyone had comments on the Warren Open for Business Resolution. Mr. Thompson said that the resolution should be presented to Town Council, not the survey questions. Mr. Phillis made a motion that the committee will present the survey initiative and the resolution to Town Council at the meeting scheduled for May 10, 2016 for approval, the motion was seconded by Ms. Volino, and all members were in favor.

Ms. Dionne said she had sent out the necessary information to have business cards made for the committee.

Mr. Thompson and Ms. Cronin left the meeting at this time. (7:30 PM)

4. Discussion of updated EDB work plan and town website listing

Ms. Dionne said that there is currently a defunct version of the EDB work plan on the town website that needs to be revised. After some discussion, the board agreed that a list of current initiatives would be better than a work plan. Ms. Dionne said she would compose a list of the EDB's current initiatives for the May board meeting; the initiative list will be presented to Town Council.

5. Discussion of Main Street business area improvements

Returning to the earlier topic of wayfinding signage, Ms. Dionne, Ms. Volino, and Mr. Terry are planning to meet with the Town Planner, Kate Michaud, to discuss integrating wayfinding signage into the Water Street improvement project.

Ms. Dionne brought up the subject of banners; she said there might be some finished banners that haven't been installed yet. Ms. Pflaumer suggested that the EDB work on an inventory on items that the town currently has on hand that can be utilized in improvement projects. Ms. Volino noted that the area around the bike path on Railroad Avenue is important to tourism especially in the summer months. Also, the board discussed Main

Street business improvements. Ms. Dionne asked what could be done to improve the appearance of empty storefronts; the board discussed placement of artwork as a possibility, but there were conflicted opinions about advertising in vacant storefronts. In the end, the board agreed to continue this item to next month's meeting. Ms. Dionne said she will do some research on solutions for improving vacant storefronts.

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Volino, the motion was seconded by Mr. Phillis, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald
May 14, 2016.

